IN THE CLAIMS:

The presently pending claims are as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) A method, comprising:

establishing an accounting session between a network element and a charging function for the session, wherein the network element comprises a gateway of an internet protocol based communication system;

initiating a change in the accounting session on the initiation of the charging function; and

charging for services in the communication system based on the accounting session,

wherein the initiating a change in the accounting session comprises transmitting a request to update the accounting session from the charging function to the network element.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the transmitting the request comprises transmitting an update accounting request message.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

responsive to the request, implementing, in the network element, a change in the charging of the accounting session.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

responsive to the request, transmitting, by the network element, an acknowledgement to the charging function.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein the transmitting the acknowledgement comprises transmitting an update accounting acknowledgement message.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

configuring the network element is a controller of a communications session relating to the accounting session.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the establishing an accounting session comprises establishing an accounting session between the charging function and a further network element.

9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

establishing an accounting session between an application for the accounting session and the charging function.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

establishing an accounting session between a control function for the accounting session and the charging function.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein the initiating the change in the accounting session between the network element controlling the session and the charging function is responsive to a change in at least one of the accounting session between the charging function and a further network element or the accounting session between an application for the accounting session and the charging function.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

associating the accounting session with a pre-paid charging function.

13. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

configuring the internet protocol based communication system to support a diameter internet protocol.

14. (Previously Presented) A charging element, comprising:

a monitor unit configured to monitor charging in an internet protocol based communication system;

an establishment unit configured to establish an accounting session with an application;

an information unit configured to inform a network element configured to control an associated communication session of the accounting session, wherein the network element comprises a gateway of the internet protocol based communication system; and

an initiation unit configured to initiate a change in the accounting session,

wherein the initiation unit comprises a transmission unit configured to receive a request to update the accounting session.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Presented) The element according to claim 14, wherein the request comprises an update accounting request message.

17. (Previously Presented) The element according to claim 14, wherein the initiation unit is configured to implement a change in the charging of the accounting session responsive to the request.

18. (Previously Presented) The element according to claim 14, wherein the network element is configured to transmit an acknowledgement to the charging function responsive to the request.

19. (Previously Presented) The element according to claim 18, wherein the acknowledgement comprises an update accounting acknowledgement message.

20. (Previously Presented) The element according to claim 14, wherein the network element comprises a controller of the associated communications session.

21. (Previously Presented) The element according to claim 14, wherein the communication system is configured to support a diameter internet protocol.

22. (Previously Presented) The element according to claim 21, wherein the the request is configured to be transmitted using a diameter internet protocol.

23. (Previously Presented) The element according to claim 21, wherein the element is configured, to transmit an acknowledgement to the charging function

responsive to the request, wherein the acknowledgement is configured to be transmitted using a diameter internet protocol.

24. (Previously Presented) A communication system, comprising:

a network element configured to control a session for the provision of services in an internet protocol based communication system, wherein the network element comprises a gateway of the internet protocol based communication system;

an application for the session;

a control function for the session; and

a charging function,

wherein at least one accounting session is configured to be established between the charging function and at least one of the network element, the application, or the control function, and

wherein the charging function is configured to initiate a change in the at least one accounting session by transmitting a request to update the accounting session to the network element.

25. (Previously Presented) The communication system according to claim 24, wherein charging of the charging function comprises pre-paid charging.

26. (Previously Presented) The communication system according to claim 24, further comprising:

a plurality of accounting sessions, wherein the charging function initiates a change in one accounting session of the plurality of accounting sessions responsive to a change in another accounting session of the plurality of accounting sessions.

27. (Previously Presented) A charging element, comprising:

monitor means for monitoring charging in an internet protocol based communication system;

establishment means for establishing an accounting session with an application;

information means for informing a network element configured to control an associated communication session of the accounting session, wherein the network element comprises a gateway of the internet protocol based communication system; and

initiation means for initiating a change in the accounting session,

wherein the initiation means comprises transmission means for receiving a request to update the accounting session.

28. (Previously Presented) A computer program product embodied on a computer readable medium, and encoding instructions for performing, when executed on a computer:

establishing an accounting session between a network element and a charging function for the session, wherein the network element comprises a gateway of an internet protocol based communication system;

initiating a change in the accounting session on the initiation of the charging function; and

charging for services in the communication system based on the accounting session,

wherein the initiating a change in the accounting session comprises transmitting a request to update the accounting session from the charging function to the network element.